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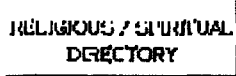
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Numerous Ideas Floated At First Public Breakwater Workshop

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Editor



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There was an advocate of tearing down the breakwater sitting next to a woman who lives on the Peninsula who had concerns about what could happen to her house. Both were giving their ideas and expressing their concerns to a lead engineer.

That, in a nutshell, is what happened in the first workshop on the Long Beach Breakwater study, which took place last Wednesday at the Belmont Plaza Swimming Pool. The next workshop takes place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Oct. 29 at the Long Beach Gas & Oil facility at 2400 Spring St.

“We’re trying to take a bottom up approach,” said Tom Modica, the manager of government affairs for the city who is overseeing the project.

That meant that after a short presentation from the team at Moffat & Nichol — which is doing the study — the 75 people at the meeting were broken out into four groups for a more detailed give and take. The goal was to get people’s priorities through a brainstorming session.

Water quality issues were on top of the agenda in a couple of the groups. That discussion evolved into talk about cleaning up the Los Angeles River and not just flushing the problem away by altering the breakwater.

The topic of sand and keeping the beaches wide, particularly on the Peninsula where homes would be protected by a wider beach, was another major topic of discussion. One of the groups in particular talked about federal sand relocation plans, as seen around Sunset Beach, that maybe could be used in Long Beach.

In another group, the discussion was about future growth at the port and how much any breakwater changes could impact them.

In several of the groups, the question came up of what it would take, after review of this study paid for by Long Beach, to get the federal government to approve the Army Corps of Engineers to do the next study in the process. That

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feasibility study would take several years and cost \$5 million or more (with the city picking up half).

The answer is economic interest. That evolved into a discussion of tourism and if improved waves would bring tourists. And, if so, could that sway the Army Corps? (Recreation is not a big priority in the way that organization thinks, attendees were warned.)

After that session, followed by a short question and answer with one of the engineers, attendees again sat down in groups, this time in front of maps of the Long Beach harbor.

People drew on the maps, making suggestions from tearing down portions of the breakwater to removing it all, and other ideas such as rerouting the Los Angeles River mouth.

In the time between meetings, the Moffat & Nichol team is analyzing and coalescing what was said at this meeting, Modica said, The goal is that the third meeting — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Nov. 19 at the Aquarium of the Pacific — will focus on even more refinement.

“Then at some point we have to turn this over to the engineers,” Modica added.

The City Council voted to do the first phase of the study, called a reconnaissance study, earlier this year and have the city pay for it. However, while the city can do this study, the breakwater itself is still under the jurisdiction of the federal government, and it will take Congressional action to take any steps — including getting the Army Corps to even read the study being prepared.

If the Corps receives funding to review the reconnaissance study, the next step would be a feasibility study to decide whether a difference could be made. Then, if Congress approved work on the breakwater, the city would have to pay for a portion of that as well.